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U.S. Policy on Arms Control: Purpose, Prospects, and Process

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Following is an address by H. Allen Holmes, Assistant Secretary for Politico-Military Affairs, before the Council on Foreign Relations, New York City, June 2, 1986.

I am pleased to be at the Council today to discuss U.S. policy on arms control. I would like to address the subject from three angles: purpose, prospects, and process.

Purpose

The purpose of arms control does not seem to be a difficult or controversial question. International efforts to reduce and limit weapons numbers and capabilities have a long history. Cutting forces, establishing numerical balances between opposing forces, banning certain weapons systems—all seem relatively straightforward. The objective of this Administration is to enhance security and reduce the risk of war, to ensure strategic stability at the lowest feasible level, and ultimately—some day—to do away with nuclear weapons.

In practice, of course, agreement on objectives—between ourselves and the Soviets, within the Western alliance, and within our own government—is frequently the central issue of debate. Geography, politics, history, and technology conspire to complicate the issue. Each party is likely to have a different assessment of the impact on its security of cuts of given dimension affecting given weapons systems.

In such circumstances, the only way to proceed to an accord is to work from clear principles.

- Arms control agreements are an element of each party's national security policy. They do not exist in a vacuum. We, as our allies and the Soviets, must, therefore, consider them in the context of all other elements of our respective security policies.
- Any agreement must be balanced, fair and equitable, and in the security interests of both sides.
- In a negotiation between sovereign entities, neither party can demand provisions which would give it superiority or advantage through an agreement.
- Any agreement should not damage the security interests of friends and allies of either party.
- Any agreement must be verifiable, and the parties must have effective recourse in case of noncompliance.

It is only on the basis of such clear principles that it is possible to sort through the welter of conflicting proposals for reductions and limitations in each of the fora where we are engaged.

I would now like to take a few minutes to review the scope and thrust of our present engagement and the prospects for the future. Frankly, as a participant, I find that while the prospects are potentially promising in most areas, the Soviets have yet to respond sufficiently to realize that promise.

H. Allen Holmes was born in Bucharest, Romania, of American parents, on January 31, 1933. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton in 1954. From 1954 to 1957, he was an infantry officer in the Marine Corps, attaining the rank of captain. He won a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship in 1957 and did graduate work at the *Institut d'Etudes Politiques* of the University of Paris in 1958.

Ambassador Holmes joined the Department of State in 1958. His assignments have included: intelligence research analyst, Washington (1958–59); political and consular officer, Yaounde (1959–61); foreign affairs officer, Executive Secretariat and Operations Center, and staff assistant to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs (1961–63); political officer, Rome (1963–67); foreign affairs officer, Bureau of European Affairs (1968–69); Counselor for Political Affairs, Paris (1970–74); Director, Office of NATO and Atlantic Affairs (1975–77); Deputy Chief of Mission, Rome (1977–79); Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting Assistant Secretary for European Affairs (1979–82); and Ambassador to Portugal (1982–85). He speaks French, Italian, and Portuguese.

Ambassador Holmes was sworn in as Assistant Secretary for Politico-Military Affairs on June 13, 1985.

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Scope and Prospects

Working from north to south, the only talks we are engaged in which are almost certain to conclude this year are the CDE [Conference on Security- and Confidence-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe] negotiations in Stockholm. That conference is set to end in September. We and our NATO allies hope that it will end with agreement on concrete measures to improve notification, observation, and verification of military activities from the Atlantic to the Urals. There is general support for these objectives also from the European neutrals. The Soviet Union and its allies have indicated general interest in an agreement but have not, as yet, been willing to engage in the detailed negotiation needed to draft the actual provisions. Time is getting short, and we are pressing them to join us in drafting.

Further south, in Vienna, the MBFR [mutual and balanced force reductions] talks remain stalemated. This despite NATO's decision last December to drop insistence on prior data agreement, to accept Soviet data for the purpose of Soviet reductions, and to ask only for ex post facto verification. It is very disappointing that the Soviets are resisting serious verification measures—particularly in light of General Secretary Gorbachev's hints that they were more open to verification. After more than a decade of argument over invalid Soviet figures, the Soviets must understand that there is no prospect of an agreement on conventional force reductions and limitations in MBFR unless they agree to accept the verification needed to ensure that those levels are being complied with. Yet, in our view, reductions and limitations on conventional forces are a key part of the arms control agenda, especially if we anticipate achieving significant nuclear reductions.

In Geneva, we are engaged in several sets of negotiations. The least well known is on chemical weapons (CW) at the Conference on Disarmament. There, the primary obstacle to agreement is not the purpose of the negotiation. Even though CW is being used as we speak, almost everyone will give rhetorical support to its elimination. The obstacle is verification. Given the relative ease of production, only on-site inspection on demand can provide an effective check and deterrent to cheating. Here again, despite Soviet indications of greater interest in verification, we have seen no concrete steps on the key question of checking potential covert stockpiles or production facilities.

The more well-known talks in Geneva are, of course, the three negotiations on START [strategic arms reduction talks], INF [intermediate-range nuclear forces], and defense and space. At the summit last November, General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan called for a 50% reduction in the nuclear arms of the United States and the U.S.S.R., appropriately applied, and an interim INF agreement. We are working in the START and INF talks to make good on these goals. There have been some positive developments since the summit, but overall our expectations have not yet been met.

I personally believe that sound agreements in both areas can be achieved. The proposals we have made—most recently, in February on INF and in November on START—offer a productive basis for negotiation, dealing equitably with the security interests of both sides.

Not surprisingly, obstacles remain. I will only touch on a few. In START, the Soviets are still insisting on inclusion of U.S. forward-based systems in Europe—an old saw which they raised in SALT I [strategic arms limitation talks] and SALT II and then dropped from both. They must realize that such inequitable and extraneous demands cannot be sustained in these talks any more than they could be sustained in the 1970s.

The Soviets are also linking progress in the START talks to our dropping research on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). This is an artificial linkage which, I am convinced, will be overcome.

First, SDI is a research program, and no one has ever developed a verifiable means of constraining research. The Soviets are pursuing vigorous research efforts in strategic defense, and we expect they will continue to do so.

Second, there already is a treaty regime limiting defensive deployments, namely, the ABM [Anti-Ballistic Missile] Treaty. What is lacking is not constraint on defenses but constraint on offenses, which are still expanding rapidly.

Third, potential decisions on the deployment of strategic defenses can only be made on the basis of research of necessarily uncertain duration. Actual deployments, if they were determined to be technologically effective, survivable, and cost-effective at the margin, would still take years beyond that point to be made operational. The Soviet Union cannot seriously contend that it is unprepared to deal with the immediate issue of reduction and limitation of existing offensive systems because it is awaiting hypothetical decisions about defenses which are years away. It is no surprise that the Soviets, while pursuing their own SDI effort, are interested in slowing the U.S. program. But that is no reason for us to accept the logic of their negotiating linkage.

In INF, the Soviets in January finally dropped their artificial demand for compensation for British and French nuclear forces. They have, however, sought to cap U.K. and French forces at current levels and to block U.S. transfer of weapons and technology to third parties. We have consistently rejected such Soviet efforts to use our bilateral negotiations to affect third parties.

In addition, the Soviets are insisting that the talks be limited to INF weapons in Europe. The Soviets refuse to discuss any reduction in their intermediate-range weapons which currently threaten Japan and China, among others. We have continued to insist that INF limitations be global. This reflects reality. First, the systems are mobile. Second, they can threaten any nation on the periphery of the Soviet Union. We have no interest in validating a Soviet claim to additional nuclear missiles to target any country or group of countries in any region. Moreover, it seems clear that militarily the Soviet Union has more than enough nuclear forces, including its strategic forces, to cover any conceivable target base.

Our position on INF—that reductions on missiles must be global rather than simply limited to Europe—speaks to the real issue of security for all parties. We hope the Soviets will realize this and that there will be progress in the INF negotiations—the area identified by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev as the most promising for agreement in the near term.

The Arms Control Process

Beyond the prospects for the individual negotiations, however, I wanted to make a few comments on the overall process of arms control. This involves the way negotiations are approached by the parties, the way agreements are implemented, and the way the issue is treated publicly.

It seems to me that we have allowed the arms control process to become excessively politicized. This is partly a result of the major public campaigns which the Soviet Union has waged but is also a product of the intensity of internal Western debates. One result is that every decision, and every negotiating move, is almost inevitably made in public. I am not an advocate of pre-

Wilsonian Cabinet diplomacy. We and our allies are democratic societies, we are used to open debate, and we can do better than the Soviets at public diplomacy—indeed, the record of the INF debate in Europe demonstrates that. But it is clear that today's degree of publicity is not a neutral element in negotiations. It can influence the choice of positions on both sides; it can limit the degree of nuance which is possible; it can hinder the ability to explore options.

Another element of the arms control process which we must look at is what happens to agreements after they are concluded. Here, the record is unsettling. Soviet noncompliance calls into question important security benefits from past accords and could create new risks. It erodes the confidence essential to an effective arms control process.

The President has provided three Administration reports to the Congress on Soviet noncompliance. The most recent—that of December 1985—reports on 18 issues. There are nine cases of violations, suggesting a pattern of Soviet noncompliance. In the cases that concern us most, the Soviet Union has violated one—and, in some cases, more than one—of its legal obligations under, or political commitments to, the ABM Treaty and the SALT II agreement.

We are not saying that the Soviet Union is disregarding all of its treaty obligations and commitments. The U.S.S.R. appears to be complying with some arms control agreements and with significant provisions of the treaties it is violating. However, selective adherence is not enough. Parties to agreements are required to honor all obligations and commitments.

Soviet noncompliance is indicative of an attitude contrary to the fundamentals of sound arms control agreements. It presents special obstacles to maintaining existing arms control agreements, undermines the political confidence necessary for concluding new treaties, and underscores the necessity that any new agreement be verifiable.

Through its noncompliance, the Soviet Union has made military gains in the areas of strategic offensive arms. The possible extent of the Soviet Union's noncompliance in the area of strategic defense also is of increasing importance and serious concern. Soviet noncompliance clearly has the potential, if left uncorrected and without a response, of undermining the essential strategic balance and the credibility and viability of our deterrent.

The Administration has been working unsuccessfully to resolve these issues through diplomatic channels, some for many years. We have used the Standing Consultative Commission to discuss SALT compliance questions on a detailed technical and legal level. We have also communicated at high levels with the Soviet Government on several occasions.

Specifics of Soviet Violations

There are three especially flagrant and disturbing Soviet violations which are familiar to you but which I wish to review briefly:

- The large, phased-array radar under construction near Krasnoyarsk;
- The mobile SS-25 ICBM now being deployed; and
- Encryption of ballistic missile test telemetry.

The Krasnoyarsk Radar. Under the ABM Treaty of 1972, radars for early warning of strategic ballistic missile attack must be located along the periphery of the parties' national territory and be oriented outward. Radars for tracking objects in outer space or national technical means of verification are not limited. Our detailed technical analysis shows that the Krasnoyarsk radar is not, as the Soviets claim, for tracking objects in outer space or national technical means of verification but, rather, for ballistic missile detection and tracking. It is also not located along the periphery of the Soviets' national territory, and it is orientated inward and is, therefore, a clear-cut violation of the 1972 ABM Treaty.

This is not just a legal discrepancy. The prohibition on the construction of large phased-array radars like the one at Krasnoyarsk was a central pillar of the ABM Treaty. Without such radars, neither side could rapidly deploy a territorial ABM defense. The construction of the Krasnoyarsk radar, therefore, not only violates a key provision of the ABM Treaty, it also raises a serious concern that the Soviets may be attempting to create the infrastructure for a sudden future move to a territorial defense.

The SS-25 ICBM. The second violation is the Soviet SS-25 ICBM. The SS-25 ICBM is a violation of the SALT II agreement, which limits each party to one new type of light ICBM. The Soviet Union has officially informed us that the SS-X-24 ICBM is its one permitted new type. The SS-25 is, therefore, a prohibited second new type. A new type of ICBM cannot differ from an ICBM that existed at the time the treaty was signed, among other things, by more than 5% in throw-weight.

The Soviets claim that the SS-25 is a permitted modernization of the SS-13 ICBM. It is not. Our detailed analysis shows that the throw-weight of the SS-25 is considerably more than 5% heavier than that of the SS-13. In addition, under the treaty no ICBM of an existing type with a postboost vehicle and a single reentry vehicle can be flight tested or deployed whose reentry vehicle weight is less than 50% of the throw-weight of that ICBM. Even if the Soviet argument were accepted that the SS-25 is a modernization of the SS-13, the ratio of the reentry vehicle weight to the throw-weight is less than the required 50%.

Encryption of Ballistic Missile Test Telemetry. The last violation I will discuss is Soviet encryption of ballistic missile test telemetry—another unambiguous violation of the SALT II Treaty.

The treaty permits encryption of telemetric information during testing—except that which impedes verification of compliance by national technical means. Since the SALT II Treaty was signed in 1979, the Soviets have been heavily encrypting telemetry broadcasts during tests of strategic ballistic missiles. At this time, Soviet encryption is virtually "total" and uncontestably impedes U.S. verification of Soviet compliance with the treaty.

The Soviet encryption practice is both disturbing as a flagrant violation of the SALT commitment and a major potential obstacle to the verification of future agreements. Our ongoing START and INF negotiations in Geneva, for example, will come to naught without a firm Soviet commitment to facilitate, not impede, verification of compliance. Such a commitment can be of little standing without a demonstration now of Soviet commitments to existing verification provisions.

The U.S. Response

Last year, on June 10, the President made what was widely recognized as a statesmanlike decision when he decided, in spite of the clear cases of Soviet noncompliance, to "go the extra mile" and give the Soviet Union another opportunity to comply with their arms control treaty obligations and commitments and join us in a regime of truly mutual restraint. This meant that the United States would continue to carry out its political commitment to abide by treaties which are technically not in force, despite the fact that the Soviet

Union had not been exercising equal treaty restraint and, as I noted, had demonstrated their capacity to violate arms control agreements. This decision was not made as an ultimatum; no deadline was issued. At the same time, however, the United State made completely clear to the Soviets through every available channel of communication that the United States could not continue to exercise such restraint unless the Soviets took measures to pursue actively arms control agreements, reverse their unparalleled military buildup, and scrupulously comply with the terms of their commitments.

A year later, we find that the situation with respect to these criteria is not encouraging. This is why the President has now decided that the United States will take the appropriate and proportionate responses to Soviet noncompliance that he suggested last June we might have to take. The United States has scrupulously kept its part of the bargain. But we cannot indefinitely and unilaterally respect agreements that the Soviets are violating. That is not what arms control is about.

In light of Soviet activities, the President has decided that from now on we will base our force posture on the nature and magnitude of Soviet strategic forces rather than the limits imposed by SALT. So, while the President has again decided to exercise the utmost restraint in the deployment of our strategic forces, he has also directed that the United States begin to take programmatic measures to ensure that the national security of the United States and its allies is protected in the face of noncompliant Soviet activities. The President does not anticipate any appreciable numerical growth in offensive strategic nuclear forces.

For example, as the Soviets have illegally deployed the SS-25 ICBM and the Krasnoyarsk radar, we will take measures to offset the security risks that those deployments entail for the United States and its allies.

For now, we'll continue to place primary importance on our existing strategic modernization program to underwrite our deterrence today, and we will also pursue the SDI research program to provide better alternatives in the future. To ensure that he has a solid range of options in the future, the President has directed a new review of a comprehensive ICBM modernization program. This includes our B-52 bomber upgrade program, which calls for about 190 B-52s to be equipped with ALCMs [air-launched cruise missiles]. He has also directed that the program of the advanced cruise missile be accelerated.

While the President decided that the United States would dismantle two Poseidon submarines when the U.S.S. *Nevada* went on sea trials on May 28, when we reach 131 ALCM carriers next fall, we will not dismantle other weapons systems as compensation under the terms of SALT II.

So while we remain technically SALT compliant for now, it should be clear that the Soviets must take constructive steps to alter the current situation. Should they do so, the United States will certainly take this into account.

This does not mean that we plan a dramatic expansion of our forces. Until we reach our objectives in Geneva, we will continue to exercise the utmost restraint. But we hope by now it is patently clear to the Soviet Union that noncompliance entails real costs.

As the President has stated:

> In order for arms control to have meaning and credibly contribute to national security and to global or regional stability, it is essential that all parties to agreements fully comply with them. Strict compliance with all provisions of arms control agreements is fundamental, and this Administration will not accept anything less. To do so would undermine the arms control process and damage the chances for establishing a more constructive U.S.-Soviet relationship.

I would describe the above attitude as tough but, above all, fair and realistic. If you will excuse the unintended pun, no arms control agreement worth its "salt" can afford to duck the hard facts. The man in the street in both Long Island and Leningrad senses intuitively that there are too many nuclear weapons in the world today. The Chernobyl disaster has shown us the terrible damage a slight, unintended nuclear mistake can wreak on the world. How much more damage would be wrought by an intentional nuclear detonation we can all too well imagine.

Whether we like it or not, one other fact is also clear: we share one earth with the Soviet Union. We are locked together in a nuclear dilemma, as is the rest of the world. I fully accept the Soviet Union's contention that there can be no security for the United States without security for the Soviet Union and no security for NATO without security for the Warsaw Pact.

The U.S. proposals on the table now at Geneva are reasonable and fair and are in the security interests of both parties. We must not feel pressured to have agreements for agreements' sake, but we want very much to walk down the path of genuine arms control with the Soviet Union. And what the President said with regard to interim restraint applies equally well to arms control: we are willing to go the extra mile.■

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